

Testimony Submitted to the Appropriations Committee:

H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Submitted By: Jeanette Allam, Grants & Projects Director, The Kennedy Center

Thursday, February 23, 2017

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Representative Ziobron and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee: my name is Jeanette Allam, I am the Grants and Projects Director for The Kennedy Center, a non-profit providing program services to over 2,000 individuals with disabilities and special needs from birth to senior years. We are among the 500+ member agencies of the Alliance.

I would like to comment on H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

We are pleased that the Governor's budget proposal includes:

- Funding of \$3.3 million in FY18 and \$3.8 million in FY19 to support the work of the ID Partnership and to begin to address the waiting list
- Pursuing the conversation of 40 community living arrangements from public operated to private providers

However, we are concerned about NO funding for students with I/DD who will graduate in June of this year. The Governor's budget proposal only aims to fund Employment Opportunities and Day Services for 93 people in FY18 and 99 people in FY19, but there are 335 people in FY18 and 355 people in FY19 who are estimated to be part of this population which is inadequate to meet the needs of the community.

These cuts would not only be devastating to the individuals themselves, but also to their families. It becomes a domino effect, in the fact that without these services many of the individuals would be at home alone causing a family member, who most likely is employed, to quit their job so they are able to take care of their loved one. Many of these families would then rely on welfare to sustain thus putting an even bigger burden on the state and its taxpayers.

As we face a \$1.7 billion shortfall in the FY18 budget, the governor and legislature have two choices to balance the budget: shift services into the community to save services and move thousands of individuals off of waiting lists, or continue with business as usual and cut vital services to thousands of the state's most vulnerable individuals and their families. Just by converting all residential services to nonprofit operations, the State could save up to \$150 million per year.

I'd also like to respectfully remind you that investing in the nonprofit sector will ensure the continuity of quality services, increase economic activity, and save taxpayer money; a "win-win" for policymakers working to strengthen the economy, the nonprofit workforce trying to make ends meet, and most importantly, the clients and their families who count-on efficient, cost-effective, and high-quality services in our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, or for additional information.

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